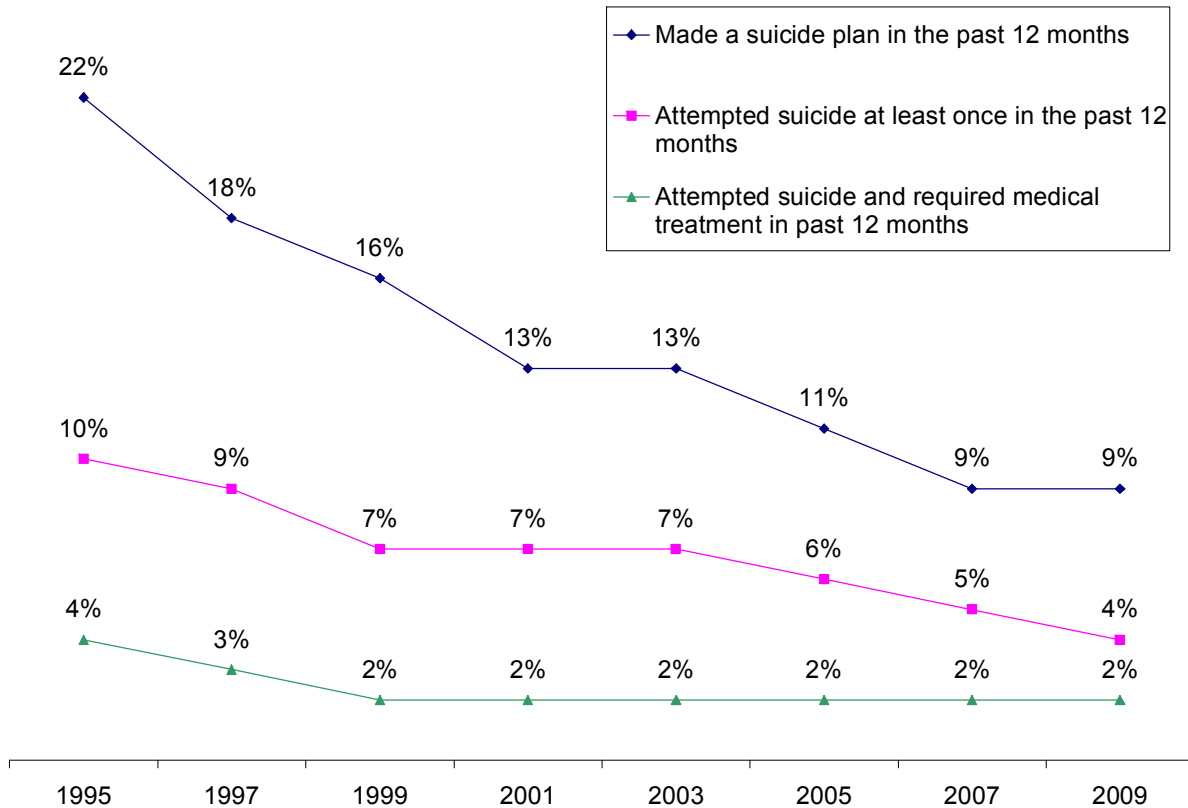


Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Data Brief

Suicidality

The percentages of Vermont students reporting suicide plans, attempts, and attempts requiring medical assistance have decreased significantly since 1999¹. In 2009, 9% of eighth through twelfth grade students reported making a suicide plan while 4% reported a suicide attempt.



There were no differences in reported suicide plans or attempts by grade or age. However, three demographic groups are at significantly higher risk for making plans or attempts. In 2009:

- Students who identified as gay or lesbian, bisexual, or not sure had higher rates of making plans or attempts than heterosexuals (35% vs. 8%)
- Students of a racial or ethnic minority group had higher rates than non-Hispanic white students (19% vs. 10%)
- Females had higher rates than males (12% vs. 8%)

All three of these groups report significantly higher rates of making suicide plans or attempts consistently over time.

¹ P-values for trends calculated using Wald chi-square for linear quadratic coefficient in logistic regression controlling for grade, sex, and race/ethnicity. P-values for all three trends were <0.001. Interaction terms for differences by grade, sex, or race/ethnicity were not significant indicating that the trends did not differ within these groups.

Students who do not report making suicide plans or attempts have higher rates of some protective factors, or youth assets. The six assets on the YRBS include: earn mostly As or Bs; talk to parents about school at least once a week; agree or strongly agree that students help decide what goes on in school; agree or strongly agree that, “in your community, you feel like you matter to people”; volunteer at least one hour in an average week; and participate in clubs outside of school at least one hour in an average week.

Compared to students who reported making suicide plans or attempts, students who did not report these behaviors were significantly more likely to:

- Agree or strongly agree that, “in your community, you feel like you matter to people” (49% vs. 25%)
- Talk to their parents about school at least once a week (80% vs. 60%)
- Earn mostly As or Bs (80% vs. 67%)
- Agree or strongly agree that students help decide what goes on in school (51% vs. 42%)

Participation in clubs (27% for each group) or volunteering (42% for each group) did not differ by whether students planned or attempted suicide.

In a multivariable regression controlling for all of the assets separately as well as race/ethnicity, sex, and sexuality, students who did not make suicide plans or attempts were more likely to:

- Earn As or Bs
- Talk to parents about school at least weekly
- Agree or strongly agree that, “in your community, you feel like you matter to people”

Upon summing the six assets to create a continuous measure ranging from 0-6, the risk of making a suicide plan or attempt decreased with each additional asset reported.

To learn about suicide prevention efforts in Vermont, please visit: <http://www.umatterucanhelp.com/>

For more information on the YRBS, contact Erika Edwards, Ph.D., M.P.H. (802-863-7246; erika.edwards@ahs.state.vt.us).

For the YRBS Data Brief archive, visit: http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data_briefs.aspx